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Alden, A.H.

For a better America

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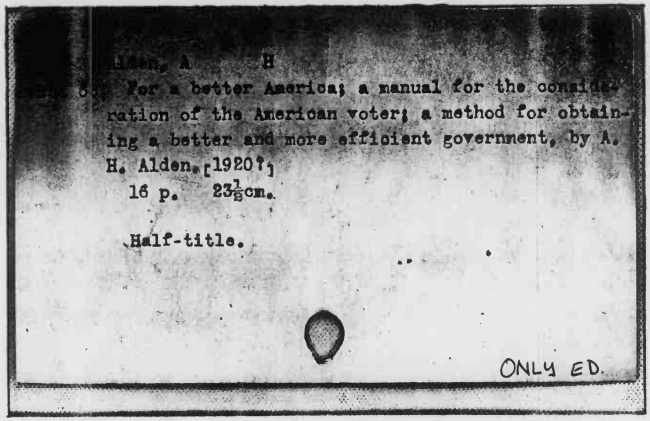
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FOR A BETTER AMERICA

A MANUAL
FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE AMERICAN VOTER

A Method for Obtaining a Better and More Efficient Government

by

A. H. ALDEN

12 Feb, 1920 - C.R.W.

THE VOTER'S GUIDE

Chapter I.

Gov. Coolidge's Aphorism "Righteous Authority" expresses the principle of the Science of Government. "Uncorrupt; honest; equitable; upright; yielding to all their due;" (Webster). It is the negation of class government.

Class Parties

The organization of a Political Labor Party or of a Woman's Party or of a Capitalistic Party or of a Military Party or of a Soviet Party or of any party which has for its object the particular advantage of a class of citizens instead of the good of all is destructive of the principles and intent of Democracy. The success of any such party means the eventual end of liberty followed by a long series of internal disorders, during which prosperity dies.

The Constitution of the United States

Captains of Industry

The scientific principles and methods of government embraced in the Constitution of the United States have outlived all the governments of the world since its adoption, and created for this country, the greatest prosperity and individual liberty and opportunity in history. The "Captains of Industry" are not hereditary, they achieved their success through ability. They started in life poor men, and frequently sons of even poorer fathers: all citizens have the same chance.

Change not Always Progress

Indifference or Ignorance of People

Definition of "Reactionary"

Change does not always mean progress, but often the reverse. The founders of the Constitution sought to make changes difficult, and only possible after elaborate provisions for submitting the questions to all the people; but the indifference or ignorance of people they did not provide against. It is to the rectification of this omission that the country must address itself. "The incessant source of progress is the desire of man to better his condition"—but progress is change for the betterment of all mankind, not betterment of a class alone. Betterment for the few at the expense of the many is reactionary. Organized factions, be they labor, capital, proletariats, socialists, or others seeking their own ends for selfish benefit are reactionaries. Their slogan is always "Progress and Liberty" in order to attract supporters; but the results are invariably reaction and oppression.

Corruption Not the Fault of the Constitution

That abuses, corruption, incompetency, and evasion have crept into legislation and administration is not the fault of the Constitution, but the fault and indifference of the voter. Had the constitution been less perfect or more simple, corruption, incompetence and evasion would have been easier and more flagrant.

Danger to Liberty

A simplified form of government is dangerous alike to liberty, order and prosperity. A single legislative chamber is the most dangerous of all. The danger arises from the fact that it is liable to fall under the control of either the mob, the money power, or ambitious demagogues. The power to make laws is so vast and far reaching that the struggle to gain that tremendous power would know no bounds. And once gained the revolutionary laws resulting therefrom could destroy our civilization; especially if the power of the Supreme Court were weakened to forbid laws that are unconstitutional or contrary to the liberty and well being of all citizens.

Supreme Court

The organization of the Supreme Court and appointment of judges is put (as far as is humanly possible) beyond political influence, in order that it may not be swayed by Party strife, and that the individual judges, holding their positions for life, or good behavior, may not have their decisions influenced in an effort to retain office at a subsequent election.

A man who is controlled by fear of votes for retention of office cannot be a free man; and if a judge on the bench, he cannot render an impartial judgment. The purest judiciary and the soundest law is to be found in those states and countries where Judges are not elective.

Never compel or permit Judges to become Politicians

The demand for the abolition of the second Chamber of Congress, the weakening of the powers of the Supreme Court and election of judges, does not come from the people, but from a small minority who believe they have something to gain by such changes. It is the continuing struggle of a minority to rule for their own particular advantage and not for the advantage or benefit of all the people.

It is a most insidious attempt to break down sound government, for it appeals to prejudice and ignorance and discontent.

Open violence and disturbance is even less dangerous because the law abiding instincts of public opinion will side with the Government to crush open revolt and uphold "Righteous Authority"; but insincerity is difficult to discover and proportionately dangerous.

The Senate

One of the great advantages of the American Constitution is the Senate—in its operation it provides abundant time and opportunity for calm second thought.

Nothing that is done in a hurry is sound. Anything done in passion or under excitement or under burning discontent is defective. "History informs us of no long-lived Republic, which has not a Senate" (Federalist pg. 394).

Federalist page 387—"A senate, as a second branch of the Legislative Assembly, distinct from and dividing the power with a first, must be in all cases a salutary check on the Government. It doubles the security of the people by requiring the concurrence of two distinct bodies in schemes of usurpation or perfidy, where the ambition or corruption of one would otherwise be sufficient."

You Cannot Hire Men for Money to Make Laws and Expect Satisfactory Results

Present difficulties lie not in our Constitution but in the men elected to administer it. If the people elect good men they will get good laws, honestly administered; but in order to obtain good men the people must demand them. As long as the people are satisfied to vote into office incompetent men they must expect incompetent laws and administration.

Danger From Men Who Seek Office for Money

You cannot hire men for money, to make your laws, and expect satisfactory results. A patriotic army of citizens is more effective and safer than a mercenary army, who only serve for pay and as a profession, or who will turn against the country they serve either for higher pay or plunder. The danger is equally great from men who seek election for the money there is in it for them. How can the public expect such men to be their representatives and entrust them with their liberties?

It was not the intention of the Constitution that such men should be elected to office, nor that professional politicians should make the laws. The intention of the writers of the Constitution is clearly set forth by Hamilton and Madison in the Federalist (No. LVII) viz. "Who are to be the objects of popular choice? (For Congress). Every citizen whose merit may recommend him to the esteem and confi-

Men Who Are Qualified for Office

dence of his country. No qualification of wealth, of birth, of religious faith, or of civil profession is permitted to fetter the judgment or disappoint the inclination of the people..... In the first place as they will have been distinguished by the preference of their fellow citizens, we are to presume that they will be somewhat distinguished also by those qualities which entitle them to it and which promise a sincere and scrupulous regard to the nature of their engagements" (pages 356-7 Federalist)..... "The Republican principle demands that the deliberate sense of the community should govern the conduct of those to whom they entrust the management of their affairs." (Federalist pg. 446).

The Government of America in the People's Hands

The Government of America, and all its machinery, has been put exclusively into the hands of the citizens; if the results are sometimes disappointing it is the fault of the citizens not the fault of the Constitution. It is due to what Washington described as "the fury of party spirit", and Dr. Frank Cranes' quotation from Pope "party is the madness of many for the gain of a few."

A great number of voters, unfortunately are political partisans before they are Americans.

This is the root of the evil.

Root of the Evil

It enables party leaders to nominate their candidates and **because** they are party nominees, people vote for them. Few voters inquire if the candidates are "distinguished by those qualities which entitle them to it and which promise a sincere and scrupulous regard to the nature of their engagements"; or whether they will be guided by "The Republican principle (which) demands that the deliberate sense of the community should govern the conduct of those to whom they entrust the management of their affairs." Is every office holder "a citizen whose merit may recommend him to the esteem and confidence of his country?"

People's Government

No possible form of government can successfully conduct a People's Government unless the people wisely select their representatives in accordance with these sound principles.

It has often been said that a "country possesses the government it is entitled to." If the people are careless or indifferent their government will reflect it.

When a Change of System is Urged

When things go wrong, and incompetency and graft pile up heavy public burdens and excessive taxation, demagogues and professional politicians, aided by impractical idealists, appeal to a bewildered public for a change of system. Such appeals are intended by the different groups either to cover up and divert attention from past wrongs; or to utilize discontent for selfish advantage and future gain; or to impose fantastic experiments on a confused country.

When New Laws are Often Demanded

Likewise when great crises arise and officials are accused of incompetency or failure to protect the public interest, a demand is often made for the enactment of new laws to cope with the particular case in point. This demand serves to protect and divert public anger from the accused individuals. It is a subterfuge; by this crafty method (a method as old as the world) public clamor against the guilty, mistakenly ranges itself on his side in an outcry for the new laws suggested. The officials are saved and may even be re-elected; the old abuse can continue and usually does, while the people forget. Puck said "What fools these mortals be."

New Laws not Always Required

It is not the enactment of new laws that is always required, for in 99 cases out of 100 there can be found among the hundreds of thousands of laws already on the statute books, a law to fit almost every case. The curse of partisan government is grinding out new laws, instead of executing existing laws.

Political Parties Inseparable from Government

Political parties are inseparable from government; but it is the duty of citizens to see that party candidates are "Citizens whose merit may recommend them to the esteem and confidence of their country", and also that their ability and training fit them for the particular office to which they aspire—above all, that they are not seeking office for the "money there is in it for them".

Experience has shown that it has been thus far a physical impossibility to organize a whole people to protect their interests and liberty; and that this unorganized condition constantly exposes them to the ceaseless activity of organized minorities.

Chapter II.

The Remedy

Until some method is discovered to rectify this condition the evil has but one remedy. **Voters must become independent voters and not partisans of any political party.** No other way has yet been devised to improve and purify political parties; I am sure that the best elements of all parties would welcome the opportunity of playing on a higher plane of activity. Many of the leaders of all parties deplore the methods they often must stoop to, to win success.

A Voter Should be Free From Party Prejudice

It is as important for the voter to be free from party prejudice and narrow-mindedness as it is for a juror to be free from bias in order to render a just verdict.

A partisan vote on election day is a blind and ignorant vote. A people's government cannot survive blindness or ignorance.

Men and Party to Vote for

The party who nominates the best type of trained men as their candidates for office; men who the public feel can be depended on to carry out party pledges that satisfy the conscience ot the country, is the party to be supported by the voter, whether such party is "his" party or not.

Two Cardinal Questions for Voters

There are two cardinal questions a voter should always have in mind. (1) What is best for **all** the people? (2) is the candidate fit in merit and experience for the office?

No Class Laws are Sound

What is best for **all** the people is best for the voter himself or herself. No laws, or execution of laws, designed for a class (high or low) are sound; they invariably lead to unrest until repealed; the necessity for doing so keeps the country in turmoil for long periods, meanwhile progress stands still and liberty is threatened.

Independent Voters

The larger the number of independent voters in the country the better and more competent will be the government. Political parties will angle for that great independent thoughtful vote, rather than for the vote of smaller interested minorities, which now often determine elections.

What the Voter Should Find Out

Let the voter turn his eye on the men who occupy official positions in the country and ascertain who among them has had past training for the positions.

Era of Specialization

This is an era of specialization in business, science and occupation; it should be so in Government affairs. Unless it is so, there must be incompetence and blundering—high taxation and grievous burdens. Let the voter ascertain for himself whether political appointment to high and low office is not dictated by influence, and reward for party service, rather than fitness and life training or merit.

Skilled and Unskilled Men

Even labor differentiates between skilled and unskilled men in their own ranks; how much more important is it in the control of vast government affairs, to make the same distinction between skilled and unskilled men to occupy positions where the highest ability and honesty are necessary to insure good and efficient government.

The independent voter can do much to compel this reform.

Ambiguity of Laws and the Reason

Furthermore let the voter reflect on the ambiguity in the wording of many of the laws enacted by legislatures and Congress. Ambiguities so great that lawyers disagree as to their meaning. Application to the courts for a ruling on the meaning results in different decisions in different courts. Appeals to the Supreme Court even, usually result in a majority and minority verdict handed down which means that the greatest Judges in the land are not unanimous in their interpretation of the law; yet legally every citizen in the land is presumed to know the law and no excuse of ignorance of the law is accepted in court.

Unfitness of Legislators

This largely comes about from the unfitness of the men and politicians elected to legislatures and Congress. They are often untrained men, unfitted by experience for the positions they occupy. The independent voter should hold such men, and the political party who selected them, responsible for immature laws, too vague by the ambiguity of wording to effect the aims intended. If this were done, we could hope for greater care on the part of political parties in the selection of their candidates. Not alone the men themselves, but their party must be held accountable for the laws enacted, their clear wording and the just administration of them, by all the people voting as independents.

Progress

No rule can produce perfection, because the public are not perfect; but it can bring about great improvement which means progress; it is all that can be hoped for.

Idealism

Honest practical idealism is a useful force in the world: it is the impractical idealism that produces trouble; a will o' th' wisp that dances its followers into a morass. Nearly all of the modern idealistic panaceas have been debated and tried in the past and found wanting. They have produced endless misery and retarded civilization for generations; they can be read in almost any history book, where many of the ideas have been learned by superficial and untrained readers.

Human nature is bound by immutable laws. There are some things, however desirable, that cannot be achieved; fortunately the common sense of the people, when given time, intuitively realize some of them, and if not blinded by "the fury of party spirit", can maintain their government and function it in the interest of all.

Chapter III.

Intelligence, Uprightness and Patriotism of Voters

Disenfranchise Dishonest Voters

The national and international safety of any democratic country rests on the intelligence, uprightness and patriotism of the voters. It is the present fashion, voiced by many leaders, to proclaim the wisdom of compelling foreigners who come to this country to become naturalized citizens, which implies granting them the right to vote; but it is far more important to forever disenfranchise the dishonest voter.

No laws can make men honest or patriotic, but just laws can forever debar those who sell their votes, from voting again. It is vital for the preservation of good government that this be done. It is within the power of the voter, and in his interest to see that it is done.

Civic Status of the Immigrant

America Confronted with International Problems

The problem of the civic standing of the immigrant takes on a more serious aspect today than ever before in the history of the nation; it is doubtful if a FORCED naturalization can turn him into an American patriot, even if he is capable of comprehending our civilization and democracy. Especially is this true now that America is confronted with international situations which may involve questions with, or relating to, countries of the immigrants' birth. It is expecting almost more than human nature is capable of to believe he will be impartial, or view such conditions from the American standpoint. It complicates American politics with foreign prejudices and interests, and adds to the danger of foreign propaganda in our midst, already too widespread and general.

Foreign Propaganda

Foreign Subtle Interference

It is an international understanding, and more or less observed custom, for nations to refrain officially from interference in the domestic or internal politics of other nations; but often surreptitiously, and sometimes openly, the custom is evaded.

In republics where free speech and a free press are permitted, foreign interference and influence takes many devious channels, grouped under the heading "Propaganda". It is not always easy to follow it to its source. There are few foreign countries and interests today who are not "propaganding" in America in some form or other for their own advantage and benefit. It is an old custom, as old as history, and among a simple, credulous people, untrained in international affairs, very effective.

Weakening the Government

To divide an electorate is the surest method of weakening a popular government when it has to deal with foreign affairs. To create a sentimental regard or affection for a foreign government or people, whose aims in world matters may run counter to the eventual interest of our own, hampers the vigor and energy of our government.

Dangers from Foreigners Voting

Our government exists by the votes of the people; if an important number of voters can be persuaded by "propaganda", either printed or by speech, to sentimentally incline to foreign influence, it must have its weakening effect at Washington. To voluntarily place the vote in the hands of hordes of foreign nationals is to face a great risk; to COMPEL them to vote, is even a greater risk. In a close election contest their casting vote could determine the national attitude for peace or war, and our enemy.

Reverse the situation in order to obtain a clearer conception of the proposition. Although there are comparitively few native Americans who have been willing to become naturalized in a foreign country, it is safe to say that the few who have done so remain in heart and spirit American, and in any controversy between their adopted country and their native country, they would side with America. Furthermore, if force of circumstances and the laws of the foreign country of their residence for the purpose of earning their livelihood, **compelled** them, against their will, to become naturalized, they would harbor a bitter resentment, eventually dangerous to their adopted country in an emergency.

Seven Questions for the Voter Re Propaganda

In regard to the printed and spoken propaganda the voter should ask himself very seriously (1) the object of attempting to awaken his sympathies; (2) the reason for spending so much money and effort (for propaganda costs much money); (3) the effect on the nation; (4) why the authors or instigators consider it necessary; (5) should the citizen feel grateful for or distrustful of the altruistic interest taken in him; (6) are his own politicians taking advantage of the attempted schism, thus created among the people, to obtain votes for office; (7) if so it is not America or American interests they are after, but solely partisan and personal advantages, even at the expense of the country, using the effect of foreign propaganda for their purpose.

The Need for a Foundation to Teach the Science of Government for the Benefit of All Voters

With constant political changes continually arising, multiplying perplexing questions in the minds of honest voters respecting good government and how to obtain and preserve it; the science of government; the attaining, or impossibility of attaining, the many idealistic new or old theories before the people; the experience and lessons taught in the past in all countries; the constitutional safeguards under which we live; there is need for the foundation of a central bureau or organization, strictly unpartisan, to whom all citizens are free to apply personally or by correspondence for information on all such subjects; but excluding political partisan advice.

There is now no possible way for the perplexed citizen to consult independent authority on the intricate subject of government. He is given the vote and tossed helpless on the sea of "the fury of party spirit"; he has only whatever instinct he may possess, clouded by prejudice, to guide him; small wonder he is swayed by passing storms and is misled for want of safe, sound instruction.

Education in the Science of Gov't

"Political Art"

Education of the people in the science of Government, and a reliable place to obtain it, is fundamental in a republic. In no other way can the "art" of the professional politician and demagogue, or ignorant misguided idealists, be combatted. Political "art" has always tended to submerge the application of the science of government and has made good, efficient government well nigh impossible.

Cause of Political Struggles and Revolutions

Most of the world's political struggles and revolutions have been caused by attempts of classes, factions or interests to obtain or retain control of governments at the expense of the public weal, viz. organized minorities dominating the unorganized whole. It has always existed and continues today. No workable remedy has yet been discovered. Until this fundamental defect is mastered further progress is unlikely unless masses of independent voters come to the rescue.

Solve Inherited Problem

This inherited problem must be solved, else the new era into which we are entering holds little promise of peaceful progress or amelioration for people, capital or labor; nor can there be any guaranteed safety for life or property or wages; they must all be at the mercy of any successful minority faction.

No Safety for People, Capital or Labor

Clamor for Weakening Safeguards of Constitution is Reactionary

The clamor for weakening the safeguards of our constitution is a serious attempt in the reactionary direction; a return to early unworkable principles which society has laboriously emerged from.

Chapter IV.

To Make Real Progress, Democracy Must Create Good Government for All

Instead of continuing the struggle between class, factions and special interests, real progress requires democracy, as expressed by our representative form of government, to turn its determined attention to good government in the interest of the **whole** people. It is a solution for real statesmanship. I see little expectation of its being taken up by public men or political parties until an unmistakably loud demand comes from an insistent public opinion; this can best be achieved by the great independent voters; for I have already pointed out that voters who habitually vote their party ticket are unimportant and unconsidered by either party; they are worse than negligible; their rights and interests are never thought of or rewarded. They are like a flock of sheep willingly driven into any field selected for them and sheared.

Statesmanship

Party Voters Have No Importance

The Genius of Free Representative Government

The genius of a free representative government is the election of their representatives by a free patriotic people. There are two fundamental requisites to make such a plan workable; (1) the voter must be intelligent, patriotic and honest; (2) the candidate must be distinguished in his community for fitness, and willing to serve for the good of the country and not for personal gain.

Neither of these two requisites have been fully attained; but they both must be acquired before the splendid opportunities granted us by the constitution can be fully realized.

For the one hundred and forty-four years of our independence as a nation the "fury of party spirit" has blocked the full advancement to competent government.

IT IS TIME TO TAKE STOCK OF OUR PUBLIC AFFAIRS TO DISCOVER AND RECTIFY THE OBSTACLES WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED DURING THAT PERIOD.

Intelligent Selfishness

There are probably few more intelligent people than the American people, or more practical; such being the case it is difficult to understand their indifference, or their willingness to submit, during that long period, to the political abuses they see, and suffer from, on all sides, city, state and national, when the remedy, by the use of votes, is entirely in their own hands; put there designedly by the great men, who wrote and enacted the Constitution, expecting that their countrymen would at least have the "intelligent selfishness" (if not patriotism) to select worthy and fit representatives to conduct public affairs, and to hold them to strict accountability for their stewardship.

The writers of that great document never could have believed the people would allow their public men to play politics under its mantle.

Explanation of Apathy

In searching for an explanation of this seeming apathy it may possibly be due to the rapid growth of the nation; a good-natured tolerance, or an undefined feeling that politics is a national family quarrel in which the voter ranges himself on one side or the other, as he does in the yearly base-ball contest, amiably cheering the winner whichever side chances to be the victor.

Time to Wake Up

This may not be a very worthy diagnosis, but whatever the true reasons have been the time has gone by for them. The nation is facing new dangers, external as well as internal; both menace the stability, if not the life, of the country. It is time to set our house in order. We need now, as we never needed before, **real** statesmen to guide us. All are equally interested, from the day laborer to the millionaire; all live in the same country and prosper or go down together.

External and Internal Dangers

If internal quarrels divide us, to the extent that hostile minorities weaken our government, we can be submerged or crippled by foreign enemies of which there will be aplenty, due to the unfavorable economic conditions in the world contrasted with our amazing national prosperity.

Chapter V.

To-day's Leaders

"The men who lead the world today are preeminently politicians, the authors and the agents of 'policy.'..... We are told that the world is hungry for great leaders. It hungers no less for great followers, without whom the great leaders are unthinkable.. ....Statesmanship has lost touch with the great ideals of mankind, with the great motives of community life..... We are in deep waters and the astute political mind is utterly out of its depth" (L. P. Jacks).

How To Find Great Leaders

If voters resolve themselves into independents, showing they are capable of being "great followers," great leaders will surely arise for their salvation. The press of the country will swing into the general movement; speakers will seek to head a pronounced public opinion; party politics will be purified and stand for "principles" as defined by Burke, viz.: "A body of men united for promoting by their joint endeavor the **national interest** upon some particular principle on which they are all agreed."

The Reward

It is worth trying for; the reward of securing good and efficient government will relieve the people of great burdens and cure much of social unrest and disorder. The co-operation of independent voters is the almost universal sentiment throughout the nation for improvement and national uplift.

Dr. Frank Crane writes in the N. Y. Globe of November 4, 1919:

Democracy and Politics

"You can't possibly have a democracy without politics. Democracy is politics. It is absolutely essential that all citizens be interested and take part in public affairs. Why should there be anything soiling in this?

"It is certain that there is a septic something in political life, something that naturally creates Boss Tweeds, something that seems to function automatically to elevate second-raters to the mayoralty and governorship. Something that stinks of graft and raises a presumption against the honesty of campaign speakers, something that even taints brilliant and first class minds .....to do things we wish they would not, things unworthy of them.....

Washington

"Washington spoke of the **'fury of party spirit!'** And Pope said, **'Party is the madness of many for the gain of a few'.**

Politics Ought To Be Honorable

"Politics ought to be the most honorable business in the world.

These are wise words, to be taken seriously by every community in the land.

A great national Presidential election is to be fought in 1920. Candidates for office and platforms will be selected and adopted in June and July, who will rule us for four years, for weal or woe. Let the patriotic and independent citizens of every community organize themselves with the sound principles of scientific government as their guide. If the organizings are extensive throughout the country they could determine the election between parties. Every party would angle for this great independent vote. If such organizations were permanent; to watch the successful party and its candidates; to reward or punish in following elections; the country would be on the highway to eventual better government.

The Spoils System Defeats Government of the People

So long as public opinion permits Government and office holding to be regarded as a rich prize to be won as spoils, a Government "of the People, by the People and for the People" cannot exist. Until that fundamental error is understood and remedied, true democracy and good Government cannot be achieved. Government must be rescued from the brutal spoils system.

Not until this is accomplished can America be the "Land of the Free."

Chapter VI.

Summary

The greatest achievement in the science of government was reached in the American Constitution with its extraordinary system of checks and balances, and is a representative republic.

The patriotic voter should demand of his elected representatives that they conduct it in the spirit and for the purpose it was intended, viz.:

Good government in the interest of **all** the people.

The preservation of law and order.

The elimination of Graft, Corruption and Inefficiency.

The prompt dismissal of incompetent officials, high or low.

Prompt indictment and prosecution of any dishonest official.

No shielding of incompetent officials.

Enactment of laws disfranchising dishonest officials and voters.

No class legislation.

Appointment of trained men only to office.

Clearly worded laws.

Enactment of as few laws as possible.

Enforcement of existing laws and the repeal of obsolete laws.

Economy of Administration and expenditure of public monies.

A scientific readjustment of taxation.

Public service to be considered a patriotic duty.

Military and naval systems sufficient to maintain our independence and sovereignty and protection of our nationals abroad.

Business efficiency in all departments of Government.

Less red tape.

Let it be decisivey understood that only the party who will give you all these will receive your votes, and you will get them.

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